

Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Claims

1. (Currently Amended): An apparatus for forming a cigarette pack comprising a first cigarette wrapping unit, a second cigarette wrapping unit and a third pack combining unit, wherein the first cigarette wrapping unit is operable to assemble a first inner frame blank member A about a first bundle of cigarettes, the second cigarette wrapping unit is operable to assemble a second inner frame blank member B about a second bundle of cigarettes, and the third pack combining unit is operable to assemble an outer blank member C partially about a pack assembly, which pack assembly AB consists essentially of ~~comprises~~ assembled blank[[s]] members A and B each containing a bundle of cigarettes.
2. (Original): An apparatus according to Claim 1, wherein said first cigarette wrapping unit, second cigarette wrapping unit and the third pack combining unit are separate cigarette packing machines.
3. (Currently Amended): An apparatus according to Claim 1, wherein the first and the second cigarette wrapping units are combined to provide[[d]] ~~by~~ a single unit operable to assemble a first inner blank member A about a first bundle of cigarettes and a second inner blank member B about a second bundle of cigarettes.
4. (Previously Presented): An apparatus according to Claim 1, wherein the third pack combining unit is configured to receive the first assembled cigarette bundle and the second assembled cigarette bundle in face-to-face overlaying relationship.

5. (Currently Amended): An apparatus according to Claim 4, ~~wherein the third pack combining unit is operable to assemble the outer frame member C about the pack assembly AB, which pack assembly AB comprises the first and the second assembled cigarette bundle~~, said outer frame member C having a hinge line along a mating side edge of the first assembled cigarette bundle and the second assembled cigarette bundle.
6. (Previously Presented): An apparatus according to claim 1, wherein in advance of either of inner frame blank members A or B being assembled about the first or the second bundle of cigarettes respectively, the bundle of cigarettes is wrapped in a wrapping material.
7. (Original): An apparatus according to Claim 6, wherein the wrapping material is foil.
8. (Previously Presented): An apparatus according to claim 1, wherein the first cigarette wrapping unit is configured to form a bundle of thirteen cigarettes.
9. (Previously Presented): An apparatus according to claim 1, wherein the second cigarette wrapping unit is configured to form a bundle of seven cigarettes.
10. (Previously Presented): An apparatus according to claim 1, wherein the first cigarette wrapping unit and the second cigarette wrapping unit each comprise a cigarette receiving station, a wrapping station, an inner frame blank conveyor, a folding station and a transferring conveyor.
11. (Original): An apparatus according to Claim 10, wherein the first cigarette wrapping unit and the second cigarette wrapping unit further comprise a drying drum.
12. (Previously Presented): An apparatus according to Claim 10, wherein in the first and the second cigarette wrapping unit, the wrapped bundle of cigarettes is conveyed to the folding station in the inner frame blank conveyor.

13. (Original): An apparatus according to Claim 12, wherein the first and/or the second cigarette wrapping machine further comprise an indexed advancing mechanism whereby the wrapped bundle of cigarettes is advanced into the folding station.
14. (Previously Presented): An apparatus according to Claim 10, wherein the first and the second cigarette wrapping units further comprise a blank feed from which, in use, an inner frame blank member A or B is conveyed into the folding station in the inner frame blank conveyor.
15. (Previously Presented): An apparatus according to Claim 10, wherein the folding station comprises a rounded pocket, a square pocket or a bevelled pocket.
16. (Currently Amended): An apparatus according to claim [1] 10, wherein the first cigarette wrapping ~~machine~~ unit or the second cigarette wrapping unit further comprises an inverting station, whereby the assembled cigarette bundle is inverted before being conveyed by the transfer conveyor to the third pack combining unit.
17. (Previously Presented): An apparatus according to Claim 10, wherein the transfer conveyors of the first cigarette wrapping unit and the second cigarette wrapping machine are each operable to convey the assembled cigarette bundles to the third pack combining unit.
18. (Original): An apparatus according to Claim 17, wherein the transfer conveyors of the first cigarette wrapping unit and the second cigarette wrapping unit are adjacent one another in offset, parallel relation.
19. (Original): An apparatus according to Claim 18, wherein the transfer conveyor of the second cigarette wrapping unit is positioned to be lower than the transfer conveyor of the first cigarette wrapping machine.

20. (Original): An apparatus according to Claim 18, wherein the transfer conveyor of the first cigarette wrapping machine is positioned lower than the transfer conveyor of the second cigarette wrapping machine.
21. (Currently Amended): An apparatus according to claim 1, wherein the third pack combining unit comprises a conveyor transfer station having a first transfer plunger and a second transfer plunger, the first transfer plunger crossing a conveyor line from the first cigarette wrapping unit, the second transfer plunger crossing a conveyor line from the second cigarette wrapping machine unit, whereby both the first and the second transfer plungers are operable to deposit assembled cigarette bundles A and/or B onto a combination conveyor thereby forming pack assembly AB.
22. (Previously Presented): An apparatus according to claim 1, wherein the third pack combining unit comprises a blank feed from which an outer frame blank member C is fed into a folding station.
23. (Currently Amended): An apparatus according to claim 1, wherein the third pack combining unit further comprises a cutting device which cutting device is operable to cut the outer frame blank member C along the bottom wall thereof to allow opening of the ~~hinged lid pack along the vertical hinge line~~.
24. (Original): An apparatus according to Claim 23, wherein the cutting device is a knife.
25. (Previously Presented): An apparatus according to claim 1, wherein the third pack combining unit further comprises an end sealing device.
26. (Original): An apparatus according to Claim 25, wherein the end sealing device is a foam belt.
27. (Previously Presented): An apparatus according to Claim 25, wherein the end sealing device is a continuous belt.

28. (Previously Presented): An apparatus according to claim 10, wherein the transfer conveyors of the first and the second cigarette wrapping units each further comprise sensors whereby the sensors are operable to detect a shortage of assembled cigarette bundles A and/or B on the transfer conveyors.
29. (Original): An apparatus according to Claim 28, wherein the sensors are in communication with the first and second cigarette wrapping units and the third pack combining unit such that the operating speeds of the units are controllable in accordance with a supply-demand relationship for the assembled cigarette bundles in each of the three units.
30. (Currently Amended): A method of assembly of a cigarette pack ~~wherein the pack is a hinged lid side-by-side vertically hinged cigarette pack~~, the method comprising forming a first wrapped bundle of cigarettes having a first inner frame member A, forming a second wrapped bundle of cigarettes having a second inner frame member B, transporting said first wrapped bundle of cigarettes and said second wrapped bundle of cigarettes to a pack combining unit in combined relationship as a pack assembly AB, and assembling an outer frame blank member C partially about the pack assembly AB.
31. (Currently Amended): A method according to Claim 30, wherein the first wrapped bundle of cigarettes having a first inner frame member A is formed on a first cigarette wrapping unit in which a first bundle of cigarettes is wrapped in a wrapper, a first inner blank member A is fed to a folding station in the first cigarette wrapping unit and partially erected, the first ~~of~~ wrapped bundle of cigarettes is plunged into the partially erected first inner blank member A, and the partially erected first inner blank member A is completely erected about the first wrapped bundle of cigarettes.

32. (Original): A method according to Claim 30, wherein the second wrapped bundle of cigarettes having a second inner frame member B is formed on a second cigarette wrapping unit in which a second bundle of cigarettes is wrapped in a wrapper, a second inner blank member B is fed to a folding station in the second cigarette wrapping unit and partially erected, the second wrapped bundle of cigarettes is plunged into the partially erected second inner blank member B, and the partially erected second inner blank member B is completely erected about the second wrapped bundle of cigarettes.
33. (Currently Amended): A method according to Claim 30, wherein the outer blank member C is formed partially about pack assembly AB on the third pack combining unit by partially erecting outer blank member C, plunging pack assembly AB into the partially erected outer blank member C and ~~completely~~ erecting the outer blank member C partially about the pack assembly AB.
34. (Original): A method according to Claim 33, wherein when outer blank member C is partially erected about pack assembly AB, a vertical hinge panel of the outer blank member C is adhesively applied to the first assembled cigarette bundle of pack assembly AB thereby allowing the pack assembly AB to hinge about a vertical hinge line.
35. (Currently Amended): A method according to Claim 30, further comprises cutting through a bottom panel of the outer blank member C ~~in half~~ to allow the first assembled cigarette bundle and the second assembled cigarette bundle to separate about ~~the~~ a vertical hinge line.
36. (Currently Amended): A method according to Claim 30, wherein the first assembled cigarette bundle comprises seven cigarettes.

37. (Currently Amended): A method according to Claim 30, wherein the second assembled cigarette bundle comprises thirteen cigarettes.
38. (Currently Amended): A method according to ~~of~~ to Claim 30, wherein the first and the second assembled cigarette bundles further comprise a wrapping material wrapped about the bundle of cigarettes within the inner frame thereof.
39. (Original): A method according to Claim 38, wherein the wrapping material is a foil.
40. (Currently Amended): A method according to ~~of~~ of ~~[[c]]~~ Claim 30, wherein the cigarette pack is a hinged lid side-by-side vertically hinged cigarette pack.
41. (Currently Amended): A system providing a cigarette packing machine, the machine consisting of three separate units ~~or machines~~, a first cigarette bundle wrapping unit, a second cigarette bundle wrapping unit and a third pack combining unit which partially surrounds said first and second cigarette bundles with an outer frame.
42. (Currently Amended): A system according to Claim ~~[[40]]~~ 41, wherein the system provides for creation of a first and a second foil wrapped ~~inner frame~~ cigarette bundle ~~for combining at a subsequent unit which partially surrounds them with an~~ and wherein said outer frame ~~having~~ has a hinged lid.
- 43-45 (Canceled)